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## **Employer Support for Employee Voluntarism**

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Data Probe Economic Consulting

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Strategic Policy  
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**Employer Support for Employee Voluntarism**

by  
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January 20, 1999

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study uses the microdata from the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) and from a comparable survey for 1987 to answer a number of key questions pertaining to the role of employers in support of employee voluntarism.

- How extensive is employer support? In 1997, 44% of employee volunteers received support by their employer. The most common type of support was permission to use company facilities or equipment (reported by 27% of employee volunteers), followed by time off to volunteer (24%) and change in work schedule (22%). Employer recognition in the form of, for example, a letter was much less common (14%).
- How has employer support change over the last 10 years? Over the period 1987-97, the incidence of most types of employer support increased. However, there was also greater concentration of employer support among fewer employees -- i.e. the typical employee with employer support received more types of employer support in 1997 than in 1987. As a result, the percentage of employee volunteers receiving employer support declined from 49.1% to 44.0%.
- What organizations or activities do employer support the most? In 1997, employer support was relatively more common for employees who volunteered for philanthropic organizations (79%) and associations and unions (69%). Also, certain activities, like fire fighting or first aid, help educate or lobby, and consulting or administrative tasks, tend to have a higher than average incidence of employer support.
- How employer support affects employee volunteers? There are indications that employee volunteers with employer support tend to volunteer for more hours. Also, there indications that employer support for volunteerism is associated with higher benefits among employee volunteers. The presence of employer support appears to have had its most positive effect on skills directly applicable to job, fundraising skills, help chances of success in job, and organization or managerial skills.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

One way employers can help the volunteer sector is by supporting volunteerism among their employees by, for example, providing time off or allowing flexibility in work schedule to accommodate voluntary activities, by permitting the use of company facilities or equipment, or by simply praising their employees formally or informally for their volunteer activities.

Employer support for volunteerism can have several important benefits. For example, support for volunteerism can generate good will in the community and among the employees, or be part of a company's effort to facilitate the transition of employees into retirement.

Employer support for volunteering can have an effect on the level of volunteer effort and the outcomes of volunteering. For example, employer support has the potential of encouraging more employees to become volunteers or allowing current employee volunteers to volunteer more hours. It has also the potential of affecting the outcomes of volunteering. For example, it may encourage certain types of volunteering and it may lead to stronger work-related benefits.

The objective of this study is to explore the above aspects of employer support to employee volunteers. Some of the specific questions addressed here are: how extensive is employer support? what organizations and activities do employers support more? what kind of support do they provide? does employer support encourage volunteer effort among employees? are the benefits of volunteering, as perceived by the employees, different when there is employer support?

By better understanding the extent and nature of employer support, it is hoped that we can learn more about the importance of employer support for employee volunteers. This can also help volunteer organizations develop a better strategy for promoting volunteerism among employees by capitalizing on the importance of employer support.

The study is based on the data from the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP). The survey was carried out by Statistics Canada in the fall of 1997, as a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey. It was undertaken on behalf of a consortium of federal departments and non-profit organizations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The following organizations were involved: the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy; Canadian Heritage; Health Canada; Human Resources Development Canada; the Non-Profit Research Initiative; Statistics Canada; and Volunteer Canada.

The NSGVP collected information on volunteer work, charitable donations, and participation in social activities and organizations from 18,301 individuals, age 15 or older, over the 12-month period November 1996 to October 1997.

The study also used data from the 1987 Voluntary Activity Survey (VAS). The VAS collected information on volunteer activity from 26,657 individuals, age 15 years or older, over the 12-month period November 1986 to October 1987. The 1987 data were used primarily for comparing the level of volunteer effort between 1987 and 1997.

In what follows, Section 2 looks at the rate of participation and hours of volunteering of employees, as well as the incidence of employer support among employee volunteers. Section 3 examines what types of support do employers provide to employee volunteers and which activities tend to get more employer support. Section 4 attempts to answer the question: does employer support encourage more employee volunteer effort? Section 5 concludes the analysis by examining if employer support leads to stronger perceived benefits among employee volunteers, in general or with respect to certain types of benefits, such as improvement of skills directly applicable to job.

## **2. EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING AND EMPLOYER SUPPORT**

Section 2 looks at the rate of participation and hours of volunteering of employees, as well as the incidence of employer support among employee volunteers. First overall results and comparisons between 1997 and 1987 are presented, followed by an examination of the incidence of volunteering and employer support by employee characteristics.

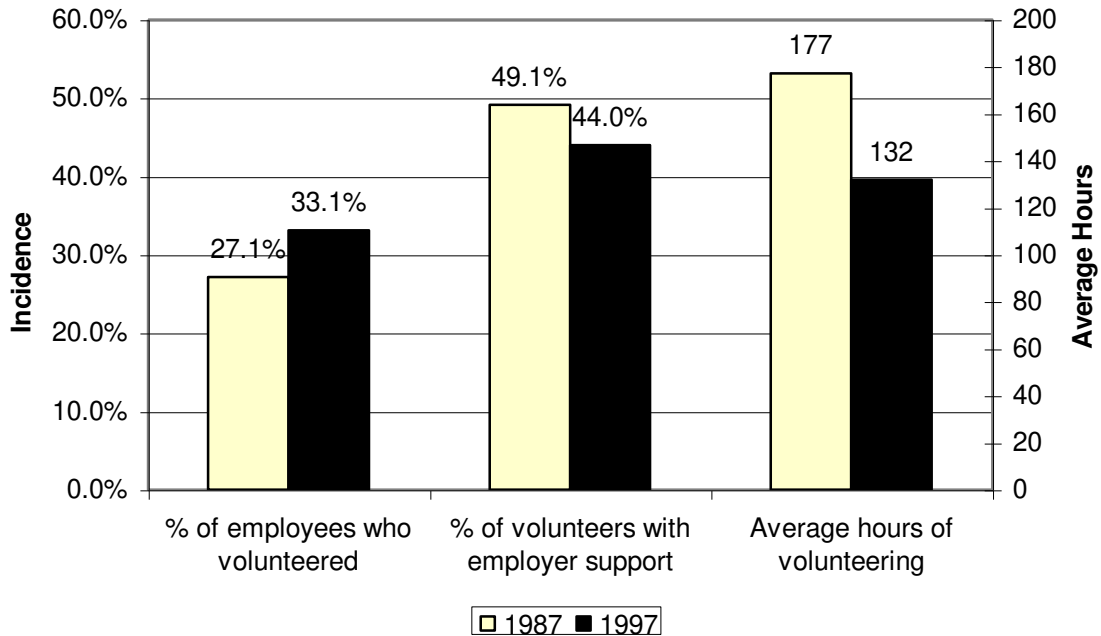
### **2.1 OVERALL RESULTS**

Chart 1 shows that 33.1% of all employees volunteered for an organization in 1997, up from 27.1% in 1987. Most of the increase concentrated among volunteers with few annual hours of volunteering. As a result, between 1987 and 1997, the average hours of volunteering declined from 177 to 132.

Chart 1 also shows that an estimated 44.0% of employee volunteers received some type of support from their employer -- such as approval to use company facilities or time off to do volunteer work. The percentage of employees who received employer support declined between 1987 and 1997 from 49.1% to 44.0%.

As it is shown later, the incidence of most types of employer support increased over the 10-year period. However, there was also greater concentration of employer support among fewer employees -- i.e. the typical employee with employer support received more types of employer support in 1997 than in 1987. The greater concentration of employer support explains the decline in the percentage of employee volunteers receiving employer support.

**Chart 1: Change in Employee Volunteer Effort and Employer Support of Volunteers, 1987-97**



## 2.2 EMPLOYEES VS. NON-EMPLOYEES

Table 1 compares the volunteer effort of employees to the rest of the population in 1987 and 1997. In both years, the incidence of volunteering among employees was slightly above the average for all individuals age 15 years or older. Part-time employees and self-employed had the highest incidence of volunteering, while those not in the labour force had the lowest incidence.

In terms of average hours of volunteering, employees had the lowest hours and there is virtually no difference between full-time and part-time employees. Those not in the labour force had the highest average hours of volunteering.

The direction of change in incidence and hours of volunteering was similar among all labour force groups. In all cases, the incidence of volunteerism increased between the two years, while the average hours of volunteering declined. As was noted above, further probing of the data revealed that the decline in the average hours of volunteering does not reflect a decrease in volunteer effort, but the increase in the number of volunteers with few hours of volunteering.

**Table 1: Volunteering Effort by Labour Force Status**

<b>1997</b>				
	Employee volunteering			Received employer support
	Incidence	Average hours	Median hours	
Employees	33.1%	132	60	44.0%
Full-time	30.6%	132	59	46.0%
Part-time	43.7%	133	64	38.1%
Self-employed	42.0%	154	80	n/a
Unemployed	29.7%	141	55	n/a
Not in the labour force	26.8%	176	76	n/a
All individuals	31.4%	149	66	n/a

<b>1987</b>				
	Employee volunteering			Received employer support
	Incidence	Average hours	Median hours	
Employees	27.1%	177	91	49.1%
Full-time	25.7%	176	92	55.5%
Part-time	34.9%	178	90	38.4%
Self-employed	36.8%	179	81	n/a
Unemployed	23.1%	202	96	n/a
Not in the labour force	25.1%	217	105	n/a
All individuals	26.8%	191	96	n/a



## ***2.3 RESULTS BY EMPLOYEE CHARACTERISTICS***

Table 2 looks at the incidence of volunteering among employees and the incidence of employer support among volunteering employees by different employee characteristics.

In terms of incidence of volunteering, it is highest among employees with university education, incomes above \$80,000, employees with school-age kids, and those working part-time. It is lowest among those with no post-secondary education and employees in Quebec.

In terms of incidence of employer support among employee volunteers, there is generally less variation by employee characteristics than is the case with respect of the incidence of volunteering. Employer support for volunteering is more common among employee volunteers with high education and high incomes. On the other hand, employer support is less common among older volunteers and volunteers in Quebec.

Part-time employees are also less likely to receive employer support than full time employees. This is not surprising. It probably reflects the fact that part-time employees are less likely to need employer support -- especially with respect to time off or change in working schedule.

<b>Table 2: Incidence of Employee Volunteering and Incidence of Employer Support for Volunteering by Employee Characteristics, 1997</b>		
	% of employees volunteering	% of volunteers with support
<b>AGE</b>		
15-24	34%	45%
25-34	29%	48%
35-44	36%	43%
45-54	35%	44%
55+	30%	36%
<b>SEX</b>		
Male	30%	45%
Female	36%	44%
<b>REGION</b>		
Atlantic	40%	45%
Quebec	23%	36%
Ontario	33%	45%
Man/Sask	46%	48%
Alta/BC	38%	46%
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
No high school diplo	21%	38%
High school diploma	27%	44%
Some post-sec/trades	35%	46%
College/ CEGEP	36%	41%
Univers degree	48%	48%
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>		
Under \$20,000	25%	40%
\$20,000-\$39,999	27%	40%
\$40,000-\$59,999	31%	43%
\$60,000-\$79,999	35%	44%
\$80,000 or more	46%	49%
<b>WORKED FULL/PART TIME</b>		
Full time	31%	46%
Part-time	44%	38%
<b>AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD</b>		
Youngest 0- 5 yrs	29%	42%
Youngest 6-12 yrs	45%	43%
Youngest 13-17 yrs	42%	39%
Youngest 18+ yrs	29%	44%
No children	30%	46%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>44%</b>

### 3. TYPES OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Section 3 examines what types of support do employers provide to employee volunteers. The section begins with an overview of the types of support provided by employers, followed by an examination of whether the type of support differs depending on the type of volunteer organization. It also looks at the volunteer activities of employees and which activities tend to get more employer support.

#### 3.1 OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF SUPPORT

The NSGVP identified four types of employer support to employee volunteers, plus a residual type consisting of any other type of support. Chart 2 list the various types of support by frequency of reporting.

Approval to use facilities or equipment was the most common type of employer support. About 26% of volunteering employees reported this type of support in 1997. It was followed closely by time off or change of work schedule to accommodate volunteering. Employer recognition, for example a letter of thanks, was much less common.

**Chart 2: Incidence of Various Types of Employer Support  
Among All Employee Volunteers  
1997 vs. 1987**

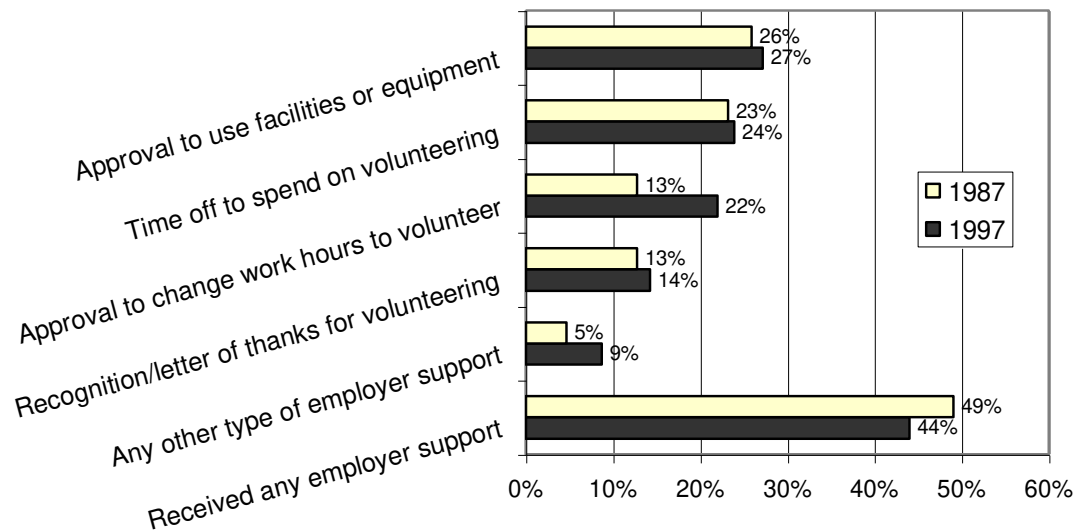


Chart 2 shows that all types of employer support were more frequently reported by employee volunteers in 1997 than 1987. At the same time, the percentage of employee volunteers who reported that they received any employer support actually declined between the two years.

This paradoxical result is explained by the fact that the average employee volunteer who received employer support reported more types of support in 1997 than in 1987. In particular, Table 3 shows that there was a significant increase in the percentage of employees who reported three or more types of employer support in 1997.

Thus, the overall decline in the incidence of employer support does not necessarily reflect an overall decline in employer commitment to supporting employee volunteers, but rather a greater concentration of employer support among fewer employees.

<b>Table 3: Distribution of Employee Volunteers by Number of Types of Employer Support, 1987 vs. 1997</b>		
	1987	1997
No support	50.9%	56.0%
One type of support	27.4%	15.2%
Two types of support	14.4%	13.2%
Three types of support	5.9%	9.4%
Four types of support	1.2%	4.9%
Five types of support	0.1%	1.4%
At least one type of support	49.1%	44.0%
Average number of types of support among those receiving employer support	1.6	2.2

Finally, Chart 3 compares the distribution of types of employer support between employees who received one type of support and those who received two or more types of support.

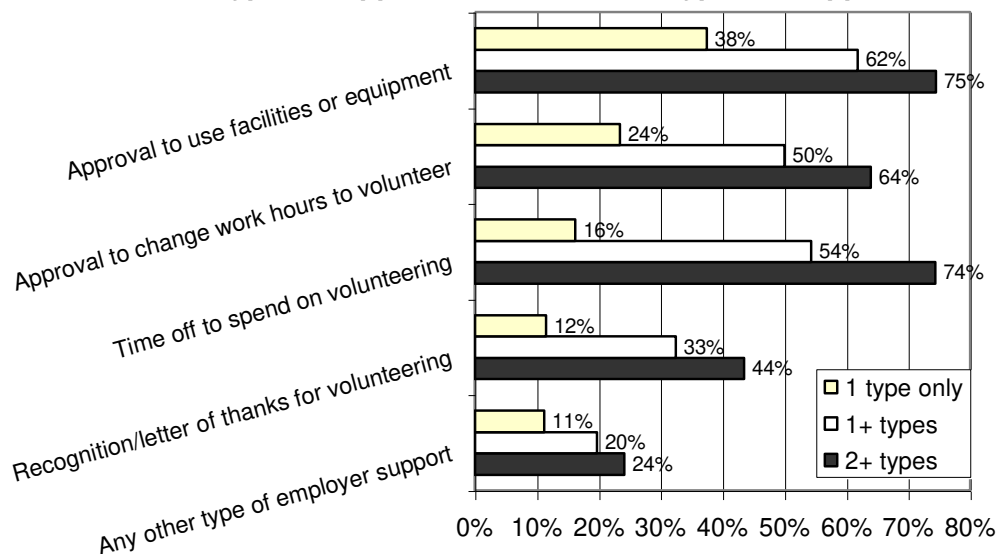
Thus, for example:

- Chart 2 shows that in 1997 27% of all employees who volunteered received employer support in the form of approval to use company facilities or equipment.
- Chart 3 shows that the 44% of the employees who received employer support, 62% received support in the form of approval to use company facilities or equipment (27%/44%).

Chart 3 also compares the incidence of a particular type of support when only one type of support is received by the employee, versus its incidence when two or more types of support are received. The idea behind this comparison is to see if certain types of support are more common when only one type of support is provided, suggesting that these types of support may be more important.

- Chart 1 suggests that approval to use company facilities or equipment is the most important type of employer support. It is the most common type when only one type of support is received by the employee.
- Chart 1 also shows that when more than one type of support are provided, time off to volunteer is as common as approval to use company facilities or equipment. This suggests that time off to volunteer is important, but less important than permission to use company facilities or equipment.
- Approval to change work hours is more common than time off to volunteer when one type of support is provided. The order of importance is reversed, however, when two or more types of support are received. This suggest that employees are more likely to receive first a change in work schedule before they receive time off to volunteer.

**Chart 3: Incidence of Various Types of Employer Support  
Among Volunteering Employees who Received Support  
One Type of Support vs. Two or More Types of Support**



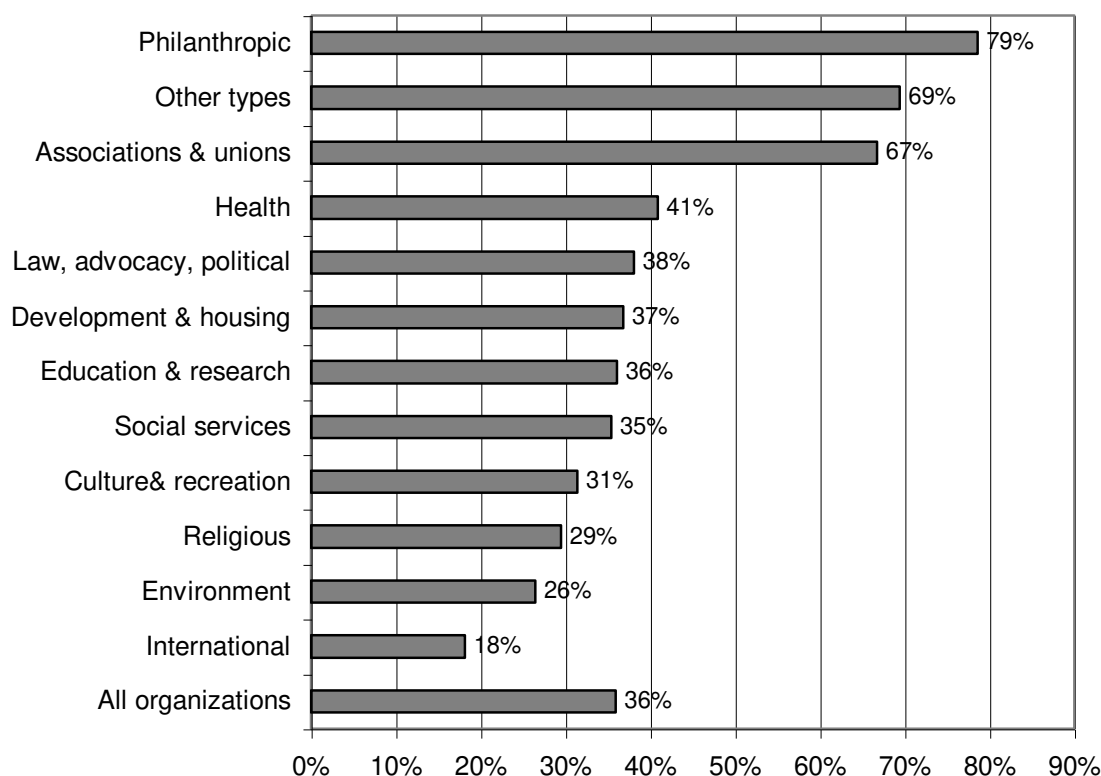
### **3.2 INCIDENCE OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION**

The incidence of employer support by type of organization is more difficult to determine. The reason is that the NSGVP questionnaire identifies the presence of employer support in general, not in relation to a specific organization or specific activity.

Of all employee volunteers, 43% volunteered for more than one organization. This means that a direct connection between employer support and volunteer organizations can be made only with respect to the remaining 57% of the employees who volunteered for one organization only.

A comparison of employees who volunteer for one organization and employees who volunteered for two or more organizations shows that the distribution of organizations by type is very similar. As a result, concentrating on employees who volunteered for one organization only would not likely introduce a major distortion.

**Chart 4: Incidence of Employer Support  
by Type of Organization, Among Employees who  
Volunteered for One Organization Only, 1997**



Of all employees who volunteered for one organization, 36% received employer support in 1997. The results of the analysis show that:

- Employees who volunteered for philanthropic organizations, associations/unions, and a residual other category had the highest incidence of employer support (Chart 4). However, they accounted for only 6% of all employee volunteers (Table 4).
- On the other hand, employees who volunteered for cultural/recreational organizations, the most common type of organization, had a lower than average incidence of employer support (31%).
- Employees who volunteered for the next two most common types of organization received average or lower employer support -- 35% in the case of social service organizations and 29% in the case of religious organizations.
- Employees who volunteered for environmental and international organizations had the lowest incidence of employer support, but they only accounted for about 3% of all employee volunteers.

**Table 4: Distribution of Employees with and without Employer Support  
by Type of Volunteer Organization, 1997  
(Among employees who volunteered for one organization)**

	Distribution of Employee Volunteers			Incidence of employer support
	With employer support	Without employer support	All employee volunteers	
Culture & recreation	28%	34%	32%	31%
Social services	22%	23%	22%	35%
Religious	12%	15%	14%	29%
Health	13%	10%	11%	41%
Development & housing	5%	5%	5%	37%
Education & research	4%	4%	4%	36%
Philanthropic	7%	1%	3%	79%
Law, advocacy, political	3%	3%	3%	38%
Environment	2%	3%	2%	26%
Associations & unions	3%	1%	2%	67%
International	0.3%	1%	1%	18%
Other	1%	0.3%	1%	69%
All organizations	100%	100%	100%	36%
Number of employees (000s)	763	1,361	2,124	

### 3.3 TYPES OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

Table 5 shows the incidence of various types of support by type of volunteer organization. The table is restricted to employees who received employer support and volunteered for one organization only.

The sum of the incidence of various types of support add to more than 100%, since most employees with employer support receive more than one type of support (the average number of types of support being 1.6).

The results show that the type of support provided by employers tends to depend on the nature of the organization for which employees volunteer. For example, approval to use company facilities or equipment (which is the most common type of employer support) varies from 87% for philanthropic organizations and 83% for international organizations, to 44% for religious organizations and 38% for law, advocacy and political organizations.

This means that the needs of employee volunteers and the type of employer support required will tend to depend on the nature of the organization for which the employees volunteer.

**Table 5: Incidence of Various Types of Employer Support  
By Type of Volunteer Organization, 1997  
(Among employees who volunteered for one organization  
and received employer support)**

	Approval to use facilities/ equip.	Time off to volunteer	Approval to change work hours	Recogni- tion/ letter of thanks	Other type of support
Philanthropic	87%	72%	36%	66%	18%
International	83%	40%	23%	40%	23%
Environment	71%	56%	80%	47%	30%
Associations & unions	68%	68%	47%	20%	29%
Health	62%	50%	38%	47%	22%
Development & housing	62%	38%	35%	20%	26%
Social services	58%	43%	45%	31%	15%
Education & research	57%	57%	57%	34%	28%
Culture & recreation	53%	50%	49%	32%	12%
Religious	44%	64%	69%	19%	18%
Law, advocacy, political	38%	57%	53%	43%	6%
All organizations	58%	52%	48%	35%	17%



### ***3.4 INCIDENCE OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT BY TYPE OF ACTIVITY***

Section 3 concludes by looking at the volunteer activities of employees and the corresponding incidence of employer support. The analysis is restricted to employees who volunteered for one organization. Furthermore, it is assumed that if employees received employer support, they received it for all activities. The reason for the latter assumption is that there is no way in the survey to identify which activities were actually supported by the employer.

According to the NSGVP, 2,124 thousand employees volunteered for one organization in 1997. They were involved in 5,315 thousand activities, or 2.5 activities per employee.

Table 6 shows the distribution of these 5,315 thousand activities, rather than the distribution of the employees who undertook them. The table shows that:

- The three most common activities among employee volunteers were: organizing or supervising events; canvassing and fundraising; and being a unpaid member of a committee. Collectively these three types of activities accounted for about 41% of all employee voluntary activities.
- About 43% of the activities were undertaken by employees who received employer support. In most cases there is no significant variation in the incidence of employer support among the different types of activities.
- Three types of activities appeared to have received a higher than average rate of employer support: fire fighting or first aid; help educate or lobby; and consulting or administrative tasks.

**Table 6: Distribution of Employee Activities  
by Type of Volunteer Activity, 1997  
(among employees who volunteered for one organization)**

	Distribution of Employee Activities			Incidence of employer support
	With employer support	Without employer support	All employee activities	
Organize/supervise events	17%	16%	16%	45%
Canvassing, fundraising	13%	14%	14%	40%
Unpaid committee member	11%	10%	11%	45%
Teach/coach for an organization	8%	8%	8%	41%
Consulting, office, admin	9%	7%	8%	50%
Other	5%	9%	7%	32%
Help to educate, influence, lobby	9%	6%	7%	52%
Provide care or support	6%	7%	7%	41%
Collect, serve, or deliver food	5%	6%	6%	40%
Drive for an organization	5%	5%	5%	41%
Maintain/repair building facilities	4%	5%	4%	40%
Assist a self-help group, AA	2%	2%	2%	37%
Protecting the environment	2%	2%	2%	40%
Provide health care, hospitals	1%	2%	2%	41%
First aid, fire fighting	2%	1%	2%	60%
All activities	100%	100%	100%	43%
Number of activities (000s)	2,274	3,041	5,315	
Number of employees (000s)	763	1,361	2,124	

## **4. EMPLOYER SUPPORT AND HOURS OF VOLUNTEERING**

Section 4 attempts to answer the following question: does employer support encourage more employee volunteer effort? It begins with a descriptive analysis based on simple charts, and concludes with the estimation of two regression equations.

### **4.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

Since the survey questions pertaining to employer support were asked only among employees who volunteered, it is possible study the possible effect of employer support on the employees' hours of volunteering only, but not on their decision to volunteer or not.

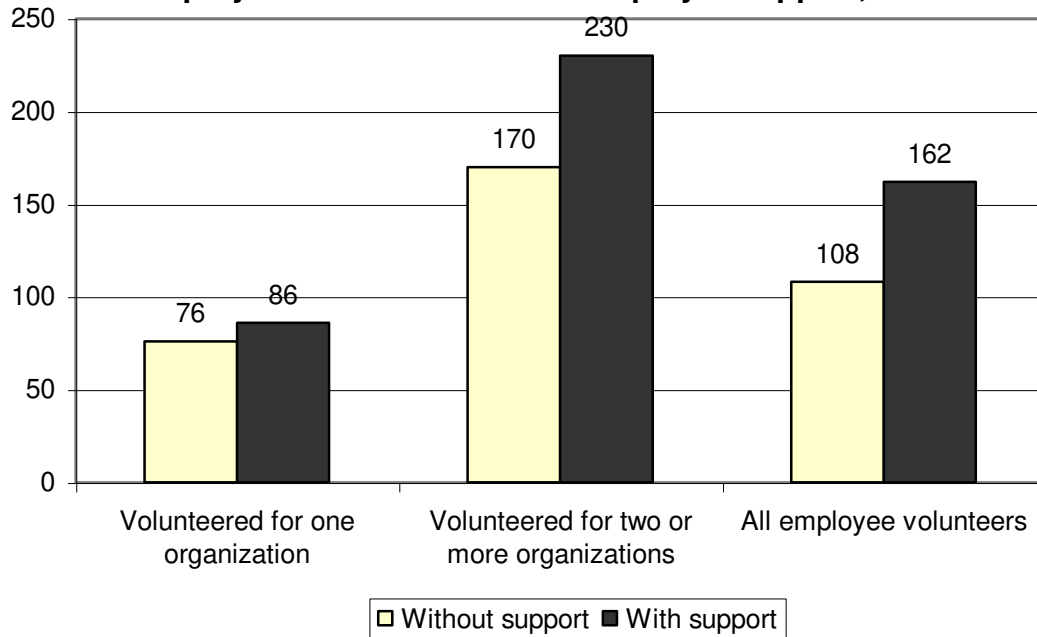
Chart 5a shows that there is positive correlation between the presence of employer support and the hours of work. In particular, among employees who volunteered for one organization, employees who received employer support volunteered 10 hours more (or 13% more) than employee volunteers without employer support. The comparison among employees who volunteered for more than one organizations is ambiguous because it is not known for which organization the support was provided.

Chart 5b looks at the hours of volunteering of employees who volunteered for one organization and received employer support. It attempts to examine if certain types of support are more effective than others in encouraging more hours of volunteering. Chart 5b suggests that the correlation between employer support and hours of volunteering is relatively stronger in the case of time off to volunteer and change in the work schedule to accommodate volunteer activities.

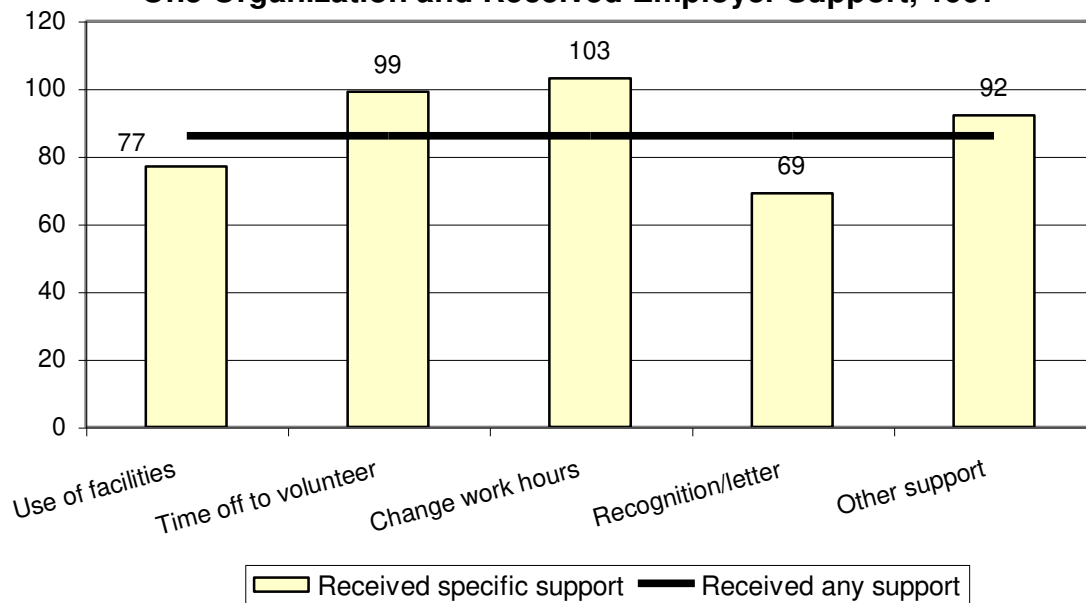
The above results suggest that employer support encourage more volunteer effort among employees and that time off to volunteer or a change in work schedule are more effective than other types of support.

However, the results should be interpreted with caution. The reason is that the direction of causality in the above correlation is not entirely clear. For example, while it is quite plausible to expect that employer support encourages more volunteer effort, it is equally plausible that employees who volunteer for many hours are more likely to request employer support, particularly in the form of a change in work schedule or time off.

**Chart 5a: Average Hours of Volunteering, Among Employees With and Without Employer Support, 1997**



**Chart 5b: Average Hours of Volunteering by Type of Employer Support, Among Employees who Volunteered for One Organization and Received Employer Support, 1997**



## 4.2 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The relationship between employer support and hours of employee volunteering was further probed using regression analysis. The regression models suffer from the same limitation as the descriptive analysis -- i.e. it is not clear what part of the correlation between employer support and hours of volunteering is due to the effect of employer support on hours of employee volunteering, as opposed to the possibility that employees with many hours of volunteering are more likely to request employer support.

The regression analysis is restricted to employees who volunteered for one organization in 1997. All independent variables are categorical variables. The dependent variable is the hours of volunteering.

### 4.2.1 Effect of Employer Support in General

Regression model 1 test the effect of employer support in general, regardless of what specific type of support was provided. The regression results are summarized Table 7, while detailed regression results are shown in Appendix A (Regression 1).

**Table 7: Effect of Employer Support on Hours of Volunteering  
Among Employees who Volunteered for One Organization  
Summary of Regression Results**

	b-coeffic.	Stand.err.	t-statistic
Effect of:			
Employer support in general	14	5.5	2.5
Permission to use company facilities/equip.	1	6.5	0.1 (*)
Time off to volunteer	28	6.8	4.1
Change in work time schedule	28	7.0	4.0
Recognition or letter of thanks	-5	8.0	-0.6 (*)

(\*) *Effect on employee hours of volunteering is not statistically different than zero, using the standard 95% probability confidence interval. For detailed regression results see Appendix A.*

The regression results show that:

- The expected average hours of volunteering is 14 hours higher among employees with employer support; the effect of employer support on hours of volunteering is statistically significant.
- Other characteristics associated with higher hours of volunteering are: male gender; youngest child 18 years of age or older; weekly attendance of religious service; and low income.
- The most negative factors are: presence of pre-school age kids; low education; full-time employment; and incomes above \$80,000 (although in the later case the incidence of volunteering, as opposed to the hours of volunteering, is very high).

#### *4.2.2 Effect of Specific Types of Employer Support*

Regression models 2a to 2d test the effect of specific types of employer support on employees' volunteer hours. In these models, the simple binary variable for the presence of employer support is replaced by four alternative binary variables representing each of the four different types of employer support. The results are summarized again in Table 7 and are shown in detail in Appendix A (Regressions 2a to 2d). The regression results show that:

- Only time off and change of work time schedule has a positive effect on the hours of volunteering (by about 28 hours in both cases).
- On the other hand, permission to use company facilities or equipment, and recognition or a letter of thanks has no statistically significant effect on the hours of volunteering by employees.

## 5. OTHER EFFECTS OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Section 5 concludes the analysis by examining if employer support leads to stronger perceived benefits among employee volunteers, in general or with respect to certain types of benefits, such as improvement of skills directly applicable to job.

Chart 6a shows that a high percentage of employee volunteers, with or without employer support, reported several types of benefits resulting from their volunteer activities. The most widely reported benefits, reported by more than half of all employee volunteers, related to interpersonal skills, communication skills, increased knowledge, and organizational or managerial skills. Other benefits reported by many employee volunteers were fundraising skills, skills directly applicable to job, improved chances of success at work and technical or office skills.

One of the most interesting findings of the analysis was that the rate of reporting of the above benefits was in all cases higher among those who received employer support. The presence of employer support appears to have had its most positive effect on skills directly applicable to job, fundraising skills, help chances of success in job, and organization or managerial skills. In these cases, the rate of reporting of benefits was higher among employees with employer support by at least 19 percentage points. However, the rest of the benefits were also more frequently reported by employee volunteers with employer support (Chart 6b).

The statistical significance of the above findings were tested using logit regression analysis. Nine different regression models were estimated, one for each type of type of benefit of volunteering.<sup>2</sup>

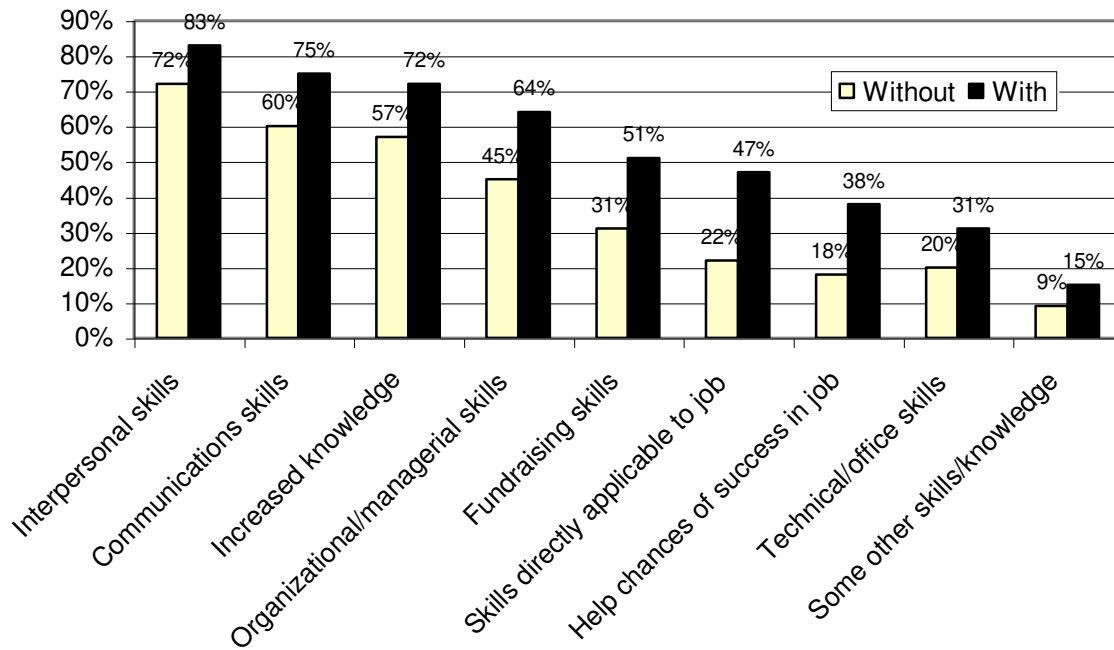
The logit regression results not only confirmed the statistical significance of employer support, but also showed that employer support was a much more important explanatory variable than any of the other independent variables used in the regression -- i.e., age, gender, region, education, income, presence of pre-school age kids, and full versus full-time employment. The incremental R-square of the employer support variable was typically several times larger than that of any of the other independent variables.

It is not possible to determine from the survey data to what extent employer support improves the benefits of volunteering, as opposed to employer support being more common for activities that tend to result in stronger benefits. The ambiguity of cause and effect is not uncommon in regression analysis. However, although the relative strength of the two directions of causality cannot easily be determined, the empirical evidence strongly suggests that employer support is associated with stronger benefits among volunteering employees.

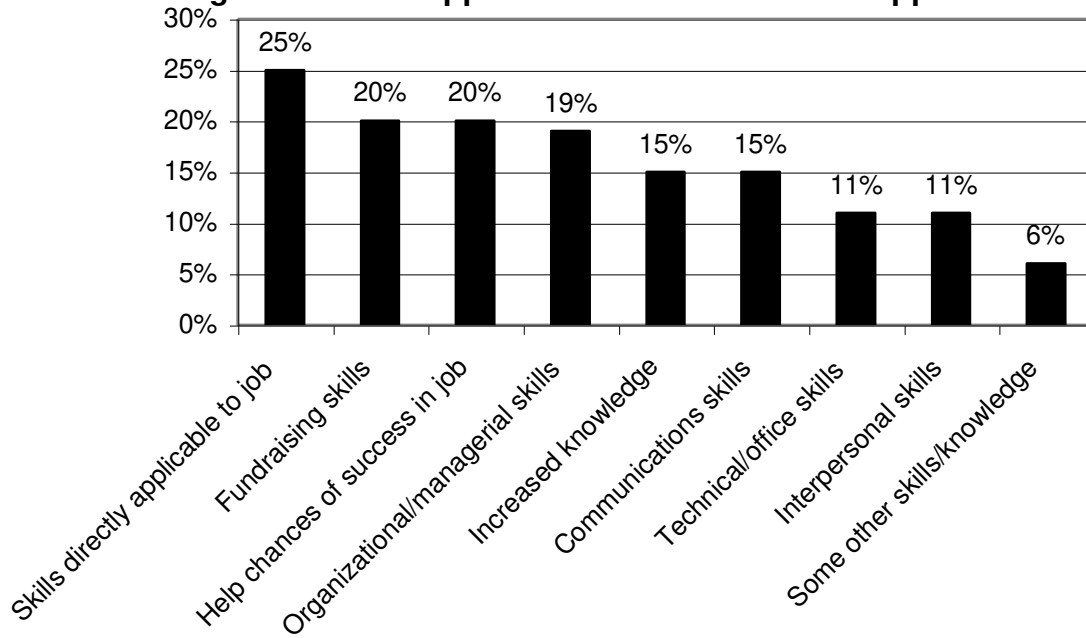
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<sup>2</sup> The regression results are available upon request from the author.

**Chart 6a: Benefits of Volunteering  
Without and With Employer Support, 1997 vs. 1987**



**Chart 6b: Percentage Reporting Benefits of Volunteering  
Among those with support minus those without support**





## **6. CONCLUSION**

The results of the study show that many employee volunteers receive employers support (44% in 1997). The most common type of support is permission to use company facilities, followed by time off or changes in work schedule to accommodate volunteering.

There is evidence that employer support has tangible benefits. For example, there is a strong positive correlation between employer support in the form of time off or change in work schedule, and the hours of volunteering.

Also, there is strong positive correlation between employer support for volunteerism and frequency of reporting of perceived benefits of volunteering. The presence of employer support appears to have had its most positive effect on skills directly applicable to job, fundraising skills, help chances of success in job, and organization or managerial skills.

The study results show that employers can and often do play an important role in assisting the volunteer activities of their employees. Moreover, the study results show that there are direct benefits to the employer in the form, for example, of developing skills that are directly applicable to employees jobs.

In addition, there are other potential benefits to employers which, although more difficult to quantify, can be significant. These include, for example, the creation of good will in the community and using voluntarism to bridge the transition of the aging workforce into retirement.

## APPENDIX A: REGRESSION RESULTS

Regression 1: Volunteer Hours as a Function of Employer Support Among All Employees who Volunteered for One Organization, 1997 Any Type of Support				
Variable		b-coefficient	Standard error	t-statistic
DEPENDENT	Volunteer hours			
ZEMPSUP	Employer support	13.91	5.53	2.51
FULLTIME	Full time employee	-25.44	7.56	-3.37
AGE1	Age 15-24	-28.14	10.78	-2.61
AGE2	Age 25-34	10.09	ns 7.68	1.31
AGE3	Age 35-44		Reference category	
AGE4	Age 45-54	-8.33	ns 8.22	-1.01
AGE5	Age 55+	-18.28	ns 11.45	-1.60
SEX1	Male	28.87	5.54	5.21
REGION1	Atlantic	8.17	ns 10.37	0.79
REGION2	Quebec	0.32	ns 7.46	0.04
REGION3	Ontario		Reference category	
REGION4	Man/Sask	-26.41	10.21	-2.59
REGION5	Alta/BC'	0.26	ns 6.82	0.04
EDUC1	No high school diploma	-23.82	9.71	-2.45
EDUC2	High school diploma		Reference category	
EDUC3	Some post-sec/trades	-12.99	ns 8.13	-1.60
EDUC4	College/ CEGEP	-5.92	ns 8.37	-0.71
EDUC5	Univers. degree	16.07	ns 8.55	1.88
STUDENT1	Full-time student	4.60	ns 12.79	0.36
STUDENT2	Part-time student	-14.10	ns 15.67	-0.90
STUDENT3	Not a student		Reference category	
KIDS1	Youngest 0- 5 yrs	-20.47	9.59	-2.14
KIDS2	Youngest 6-12 yrs		Reference category	
KIDS3	Youngest 13-17 yrs	-7.43	ns 11.30	-0.66
KIDS4	Youngest 18+ yrs	24.59	12.44	1.98
KIDS5	No children	5.94	ns 8.61	0.69
HEALTH1	Excellent	-0.65	ns 7.20	-0.09
HEALTH2	Very good	0.61	ns 6.93	0.09
HEALTH3	Good		Reference category	
HEALTH4	Fair	-15.28	ns 12.16	-1.26
HEALTH5	Poor	-4.07	ns 29.35	-0.14
REL_ATT1	At least once a week	51.51	9.20	5.60
REL_ATT2	At least once a month'		Reference category	
REL_ATT3	3 or 4 times a year	-2.87	ns 10.16	-0.28
REL_ATT4	Once or twice a year	-4.42	ns 10.53	-0.42
REL_ATT5	Not at all	3.24	ns 8.52	0.38
INCOME1	Under \$20,000	28.66	10.13	2.83
INCOME2	\$20,000-\$39,999	-1.38	ns 7.90	-0.18
INCOME3	\$40,000-\$59,999		Reference category	
INCOME4	\$60,000-\$79,999	9.98	ns 7.68	1.30
INCOME5	\$80,000 or more	-27.43	7.58	-3.62
(Constant)		80.09	13.96	5.74

Adjusted R-square: 5.0%    Standard error: 141.7    No. of observations: 2,988  
ns: b-coefficient not significant at the 95% level of confidence.

**Regression 2a: Volunteer Hours as a Function of Employer Support  
Among All Employees who Volunteered for One Organization, 1997  
Permission to Use Company Facilities or Equipment**

Variable		b-coefficient		Standard error	t-statistic
DEPENDENT	Volunteer hours				
ZAQ22A	Use of company facilities/equip	0.91	ns	6.51	0.14
FULLTIME	Full time employee	-24.66		7.58	-3.25
AGE1	Age 15-24	-28.08		10.80	-2.60
AGE2	Age 25-34	10.65	ns	7.69	1.39
AGE3	Age 35-44		Reference category		
AGE4	Age 45-54	-8.48	ns	8.23	-1.03
AGE5	Age 55+	-19.87	ns	11.45	-1.74
SEX1	Male	28.81		5.55	5.19
REGION1	Atlantic	7.50	ns	10.38	0.72
REGION2	Quebec	-0.60	ns	7.46	-0.08
REGION3	Ontario		Reference category		
REGION4	Man/Sask	-26.49		10.22	-2.59
REGION5	Alta/BC'	-0.07	ns	6.83	-0.01
EDUC1	No high school diploma	-24.09		9.72	-2.48
EDUC2	High school diploma		Reference category		
EDUC3	Some post-sec/trades	-12.61	ns	8.15	-1.55
EDUC4	College/ CEGEP	-6.41	ns	8.38	-0.77
EDUC5	Univers. degree	15.80	ns	8.56	1.85
STUDENT1	Full-time student	4.59	ns	12.81	0.36
STUDENT2	Part-time student	-14.59	ns	15.69	-0.93
STUDENT3	Not a student		Reference category		
KIDS1	Youngest 0- 5 yrs	-20.10		9.60	-2.09
KIDS2	Youngest 6-12 yrs		Reference category		
KIDS3	Youngest 13-17 yrs	-7.73	ns	11.31	-0.68
KIDS4	Youngest 18+ yrs	26.40		12.44	2.12
KIDS5	No children	7.62	ns	8.61	0.89
HEALTH1	Excellent	-0.39	ns	7.21	-0.05
HEALTH2	Very good	1.00	ns	6.94	0.14
HEALTH3	Good		Reference category		
HEALTH4	Fair	-15.68	ns	12.17	-1.29
HEALTH5	Poor	-2.32	ns	29.39	-0.08
REL_ATT1	At least once a week	51.31		9.21	5.57
REL_ATT2	At least once a month'		Reference category		
REL_ATT3	3 or 4 times a year	-0.81	ns	10.15	-0.08
REL_ATT4	Once or twice a year	-3.48	ns	10.55	-0.33
REL_ATT5	Not at all	4.10	ns	8.53	0.48
INCOME1	Under \$20,000	28.35		10.15	2.80
INCOME2	\$20,000-\$39,999	-1.21	ns	7.91	-0.15
INCOME3	\$40,000-\$59,999		Reference category		
INCOME4	\$60,000-\$79,999	10.61	ns	7.69	1.38
INCOME5	\$80,000 or more	-26.63		7.59	-3.51
(Constant)		82.52		13.94	5.92

Adjusted R-square: 4.8%    Standard error: 141.8    No. of observations: 2,988  
ns: b-coefficient not significant at the 95% level of confidence.

**Regression 2b: Volunteer Hours as a Function of Employer Support  
Among All Employees who Volunteered for One Organization, 1997**

**Time Off to Volunteer**

Variable		b-coefficient		Standard error	t-statistic
DEPENDENT	Volunteer hours				
ZAQ22B	Time off to volunteer	27.77		6.78	4.10
FULLTIME	Full time employee	-26.05		7.54	-3.45
AGE1	Age 15-24	-28.72		10.76	-2.67
AGE2	Age 25-34	10.36	ns	7.66	1.35
AGE3	Age 35-44		Reference category		
AGE4	Age 45-54	-8.16	ns	8.21	-1.00
AGE5	Age 55+	-18.41	ns	11.41	-1.61
SEX1	Male	28.86		5.53	5.22
REGION1	Atlantic	8.95	ns	10.35	0.86
REGION2	Quebec	2.02	ns	7.47	0.27
REGION3	Ontario		Reference category		
REGION4	Man/Sask	-26.92		10.19	-2.64
REGION5	Alta/BC'	0.56	ns	6.81	0.08
EDUC1	No high school diploma	-21.94		9.70	-2.26
EDUC2	High school diploma		Reference category		
EDUC3	Some post-sec/trades	-12.94	ns	8.11	-1.60
EDUC4	College/ CEGEP	-5.26	ns	8.36	-0.63
EDUC5	Univers. degree	16.25	ns	8.54	1.90
STUDENT1	Full-time student	4.94	ns	12.77	0.39
STUDENT2	Part-time student	-14.19	ns	15.64	-0.91
STUDENT3	Not a student		Reference category		
KIDS1	Youngest 0- 5 yrs	-20.04		9.57	-2.09
KIDS2	Youngest 6-12 yrs		Reference category		
KIDS3	Youngest 13-17 yrs	-7.15	ns	11.28	-0.63
KIDS4	Youngest 18+ yrs	24.04	ns	12.41	1.94
KIDS5	No children	5.51	ns	8.58	0.64
HEALTH1	Excellent	-0.42	ns	7.19	-0.06
HEALTH2	Very good	1.58	ns	6.92	0.23
HEALTH3	Good		Reference category		
HEALTH4	Fair	-14.47	ns	12.14	-1.19
HEALTH5	Poor	-8.99	ns	29.33	-0.31
REL_ATT1	At least once a week	51.56		9.18	5.62
REL_ATT2	At least once a month'		Reference category		
REL_ATT3	3 or 4 times a year	-4.13	ns	10.14	-0.41
REL_ATT4	Once or twice a year	-4.40	ns	10.51	-0.42
REL_ATT5	Not at all	3.50	ns	8.50	0.41
INCOME1	Under \$20,000	28.13		10.12	2.78
INCOME2	\$20,000-\$39,999	-1.52	ns	7.88	-0.19
INCOME3	\$40,000-\$59,999		Reference category		
INCOME4	\$60,000-\$79,999	9.22	ns	7.67	1.20
INCOME5	\$80,000 or more	-27.67		7.57	-3.66
(Constant)		79.52		13.92	5.71

Adjusted R-square: 5.3%    Standard error: 141.4    No. of observations: 2,988  
ns: b-coefficient not significant at the 95% level of confidence.

**Regression 2c: Volunteer Hours as a Function of Employer Support  
Among All Employees who Volunteered for One Organization, 1997  
Change of Work Hours Schedule**

Variable		b-coefficient		Standard error	t-statistic
DEPENDENT	Volunteer hours				
ZAQ22C	Change of work hours schedule	27.95		6.98	4.01
FULLTIME	Full time employee	-24.10		7.54	-3.20
AGE1	Age 15-24	-28.89		10.76	-2.68
AGE2	Age 25-34	10.26	ns	7.67	1.34
AGE3	Age 35-44		Reference category		
AGE4	Age 45-54	-7.49	ns	8.21	-0.91
AGE5	Age 55+	-18.69	ns	11.41	-1.64
SEX1	Male	27.74		5.53	5.01
REGION1	Atlantic	8.31	ns	10.35	0.80
REGION2	Quebec	0.43	ns	7.44	0.06
REGION3	Ontario		Reference category		
REGION4	Man/Sask	-26.89		10.19	-2.64
REGION5	Alta/BC'	-0.44	ns	6.81	-0.07
EDUC1	No high school diploma	-23.42		9.69	-2.42
EDUC2	High school diploma		Reference category		
EDUC3	Some post-sec/trades	-12.72	ns	8.11	-1.57
EDUC4	College/ CEGEP	-5.83	ns	8.35	-0.70
EDUC5	Univers. degree	15.91	ns	8.54	1.86
STUDENT1	Full-time student	3.78	ns	12.77	0.30
STUDENT2	Part-time student	-13.94	ns	15.64	-0.89
STUDENT3	Not a student		Reference category		
KIDS1	Youngest 0- 5 yrs	-19.76		9.57	-2.06
KIDS2	Youngest 6-12 yrs		Reference category		
KIDS3	Youngest 13-17 yrs	-5.22	ns	11.29	-0.46
KIDS4	Youngest 18+ yrs	26.21		12.40	2.11
KIDS5	No children	6.48	ns	8.57	0.76
HEALTH1	Excellent	-0.61	ns	7.19	-0.08
HEALTH2	Very good	0.94	ns	6.92	0.14
HEALTH3	Good		Reference category		
HEALTH4	Fair	-13.79	ns	12.15	-1.14
HEALTH5	Poor	-1.53	ns	29.29	-0.05
REL_ATT1	At least once a week	50.17		9.19	5.46
REL_ATT2	At least once a month'		Reference category		
REL_ATT3	3 or 4 times a year	-3.99	ns	10.14	-0.39
REL_ATT4	Once or twice a year	-4.90	ns	10.51	-0.47
REL_ATT5	Not at all	3.38	ns	8.50	0.40
INCOME1	Under \$20,000	29.71		10.12	2.94
INCOME2	\$20,000-\$39,999	-1.10	ns	7.88	-0.14
INCOME3	\$40,000-\$59,999		Reference category		
INCOME4	\$60,000-\$79,999	9.40	ns	7.67	1.23
INCOME5	\$80,000 or more	-26.63		7.57	-3.52
(Constant)		79.20		13.93	5.69

Adjusted R-square: 5.3%    Standard error: 141.4    No. of observations: 2,988  
ns: b-coefficient not significant at the 95% level of confidence.

**Regression 2d: Volunteer Hours as a Function of Employer Support  
Among All Employees who Volunteered for One Organization, 1997  
Recognition/Letter of Thanks**

Variable		b-coefficient		Standard error	t-statistic
DEPENDENT	Volunteer hours				
ZAQ22D	Recognition/letter of thanks	-4.47	ns	7.98	-0.56
FULLTIME	Full time employee	-24.58		7.56	-3.25
AGE1	Age 15-24	-27.95		10.80	-2.59
AGE2	Age 25-34	10.62	ns	7.69	1.38
AGE3	Age 35-44		Reference category		
AGE4	Age 45-54	-8.42	ns	8.23	-1.02
AGE5	Age 55+	-19.86	ns	11.44	-1.74
SEX1	Male	28.69		5.54	5.18
REGION1	Atlantic	7.38	ns	10.38	0.71
REGION2	Quebec	-0.89	ns	7.48	-0.12
REGION3	Ontario		Reference category		
REGION4	Man/Sask	-26.58		10.22	-2.60
REGION5	Alta/BC'	-0.24	ns	6.83	-0.04
EDUC1	No high school diploma	-24.23		9.72	-2.49
EDUC2	High school diploma		Reference category		
EDUC3	Some post-sec/trades	-12.54	ns	8.14	-1.54
EDUC4	College/ CEGEP	-6.36	ns	8.37	-0.76
EDUC5	Univers. degree	15.91	ns	8.56	1.86
STUDENT1	Full-time student	4.58	ns	12.80	0.36
STUDENT2	Part-time student	-14.71	ns	15.68	-0.94
STUDENT3	Not a student		Reference category		
KIDS1	Youngest 0- 5 yrs	-20.13		9.60	-2.10
KIDS2	Youngest 6-12 yrs		Reference category		
KIDS3	Youngest 13-17 yrs	-7.70	ns	11.31	-0.68
KIDS4	Youngest 18+ yrs	26.20		12.44	2.11
KIDS5	No children	7.86	ns	8.59	0.91
HEALTH1	Excellent	-0.30	ns	7.21	-0.04
HEALTH2	Very good	1.22	ns	6.95	0.18
HEALTH3	Good		Reference category		
HEALTH4	Fair	-15.54	ns	12.17	-1.28
HEALTH5	Poor	-1.46	ns	29.39	-0.05
REL_ATT1	At least once a week	51.15		9.21	5.55
REL_ATT2	At least once a month'		Reference category		
REL_ATT3	3 or 4 times a year	-0.34	ns	10.16	-0.03
REL_ATT4	Once or twice a year	-3.13	ns	10.55	-0.30
REL_ATT5	Not at all	4.32	ns	8.52	0.51
INCOME1	Under \$20,000	28.37		10.14	2.80
INCOME2	\$20,000-\$39,999	-1.16	ns	7.90	-0.15
INCOME3	\$40,000-\$59,999		Reference category		
INCOME4	\$60,000-\$79,999	10.77	ns	7.69	1.40
INCOME5	\$80,000 or more	-26.45		7.59	-3.49
(Constant)		82.85		13.95	5.94

Adjusted R-square: 4.8%    Standard error: 141.8    No. of observations: 2,988  
ns: b-coefficient not significant at the 95% level of confidence.

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